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Docket No. JA9-98-073
Firm No. 0036.0066

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected pending claims 2-37 as obvious in view of DeFalco. Applicants traverse the rejections with respect to the amended claims for the following reasons.

Amended claims 2, 10, and 18 concern a medium feeding apparatus for feeding a medium including at least one align roller to align a medium in a path. A feed assistance member includes a shaft and a feed assistance roller rotably mounted to the shaft and positioned to apply pressure on the medium in the path to stabilize the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller. The feed assistance member is not rotably connected to the align roller and the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller.

Applicants amended claims 2, 10, and 18 to remove the term "align" to clarify that the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner cited feed assistance roller 74, shown in FIGs. 1 and 4 in rejecting claims 2, 10, and 18. (Final Office Action, pgs. 1-2). As shown in FIG. 4, the roller 74 is vertically aligned with a counter roller 70. see, DeFalco, col. 2, lines 54-59. Thus, neither the cited roller 74 nor counter roller 70 teaches or suggest the claim requirement that the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller. In fact, the cited roller system 70 and 74 of DeFalco teaches the exact opposite in that cited roller 74 and counter roller 70 are shown in FIG. 4 as vertically aligned.

Further, other rollers the Examiner referenced in the previous Office Action, such as roller (59), as well as rollers 45 and 47 are vertically aligned with rollers 44, 46, and 55, respectively.

For these reasons, Applicants submit that the independent claims 2, 10, and 18 are patentable over the cited DeFalco because DeFalco, nor any other cited art, teaches or suggests the requirement that the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller.

Applicants rewrote claims 3, 12, and 21 in independent form to include all the requirements of base claims 2, 10, and 18, respectively. Applicants submit that claims 3, 11, and 21 are patentable over DeFalco for the reasons discussed above with respect to claims 2, 10, and 18 and because the additional requirements of claims 3, 12, and 21 are not disclosed in DeFalco.

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The Examiner cited the roller 74, which is aligned with counter roller 70, as the claimed feed assistance member. Claims 3, 12, and 21 additionally require that the at least one align roller comprises at least one vertical align roller to align the medium in the vertical direction. A lateral align roller to align the medium in the lateral direction, wherein the feed assistance member is mounted between one lateral align roller and one vertical align roller.

Applicants submit that FIG. 1 of DeFalco does not disclose the cited roller 74 or 70 mounted between one lateral align roller and one vertical align roller as claimed.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner found that DeFalco teaches that roller 47 is vertically aligned and that roller 59 is laterally aligned as shown in FIGs. 1 and 3. (Final Office Action, pg. 2) Although DeFalco shows rollers that are vertically and laterally aligned, nowhere does the cited DeFalco suggest a feed assistance member as claimed, i.e., not vertically aligned with any roller, mounted between one lateral and one vertical align rollers. Accordingly, claims 3, 12, and 21 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Dependent claims 4-9, 27, 28, 32, 33; 11, 13-17, 30, 31, 34, and 35; and 19, 20, and 22-26, 29, 36, and 37 are patentable over the cited art because they depend from one of the independent claims discussed above. Further, claims 7, 16, 28, and 31-37 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art for the reasons discussed below.

Claims 7 and 16 depend from claims 2 and 10 and further recite that the total weight of the feed assistance roller is applied onto the medium. The Examiner found the col. 2, lines 41-49 of DeFalco taught this requirement. (First Office Action, pg. 3) Applicant traverses.

The cited col. 2, lines 41-49 of DeFalco mentions that the weight of the rollers and the friction of rubber 50 is sufficient to transport sheets of paper. Rubber 50 is the layer of rubber covering the lobes of the rollers 44, 46, 55 that transport the paper. (DeFalco, col. 2, lines 19-21). This cited section nowhere mentions the claim requirement that the total weight of the feed assistance roller, or what DeFalco calls the rollers 45, 47, and 58, is applied onto the medium. Instead, DeFalco only mentions that the weight of the idler rollers and friction of the rubber 40 on the rollers that transport the paper, lobed rollers 44, 46, 55, is sufficient to permit the paper to

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move through the vertically aligned rollers. For these reasons, claims 7 and 16 provide further grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 28 and 31 depend from claims 3 and 12, and further require that the at least one vertical align roller comprises two vertical align rollers, and wherein the feed assistance roller is further mounted between the two vertical align rollers.

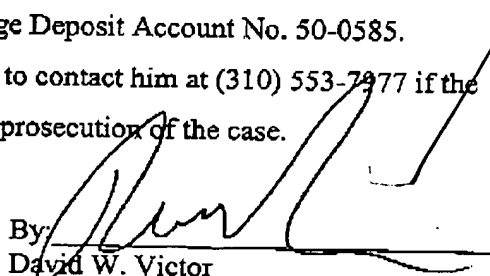
The Examiner cited FIG. 1 of DeFalco. (First Office Action, pg. 3). As discussed, in DeFalco, the idlers are vertically aligned to the align rollers, i.e., they rest directly above the align rollers. Thus, DeFalco does not teach or suggest that the feed assistance roller is mounted between two vertical align rollers. For this reason, claims 28 and 31 provide additional grounds for patentability over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that, for the above discussed reasons, the pending claims 1-37 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have submitted herewith a form authorizing charging of a credit card for the fee for rewriting certain dependent claims into independent form. Should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 50-0585.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at (310) 553-7977 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

Dated: November 28, 2001

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Claims 2, 3, 10, 12, 18, and 21 have been amended and claims 32-37 added as follows:

2. (Thrice Amended) A medium feeding apparatus comprising:
at least one align roller to align a medium in a path; and
a feed assistance member comprising:

(i) a shaft; and

(ii) a feed assistance roller rotably mounted to the shaft and positioned to apply pressure on the medium in the path to stabilize the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller, wherein the feed assistance member is not rotably connected to the align roller, and wherein the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any [align] roller.

3. (Twice Amended) [The medium feeding apparatus of claim 2,] A medium feeding apparatus comprising:

[wherein the at least one align roller comprises] at least one vertical align roller to align the medium in the vertical direction; [and further comprising]

a lateral align roller to align the medium in the lateral direction[.]; and

a feed assistance member comprising:

(i) a shaft; and

(ii) a feed assistance roller rotably mounted to the shaft and positioned to apply pressure on the medium in the path to stabilize the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller, wherein the feed assistance member is not rotably connected to the align roller, wherein the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller, and wherein the feed assistance member is mounted between one lateral align roller and one vertical align roller.

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10. (Thrice Amended) A medium processing device including a medium feeding apparatus to feed the medium through a feed path in the processing device, wherein the medium feeding apparatus comprises:

at least one align roller to align a medium in a path; and
a feed assistance member comprising:

(i) a shaft;

(ii) a feed assistance roller rotably mounted to the shaft and positioned to apply pressure on the medium in the path to stabilize the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller, wherein the feed assistance member is not rotably connected to the align roller, and wherein the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any [align] roller.

12. (Twice Amended) [The medium processing device of claim 10,] A medium processing device including a medium feeding apparatus to feed the medium through a feed path in the processing device, wherein the medium feeding apparatus comprises:

[wherein the at least one align roller comprises] at least one vertical align roller to align the medium in the vertical direction; [and wherein the medium feeding apparatus further comprises]

a lateral align roller to align the medium in the lateral direction[.];

a feed assistance member comprising:

(i) a shaft; and

(ii) a feed assistance roller rotably mounted to the shaft and positioned to apply pressure on the medium in the path to stabilize the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller, wherein the feed assistance member is not rotably connected to the align roller, wherein the feed assistance roller is not vertically aligned with any roller, and wherein the feed assistance member is mounted between one lateral align roller and one vertical align roller.

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18. (Twice Amended) A feed assistance apparatus for feeding a medium in a medium processing apparatus, comprising:

at least one align roller for feeding the medium;

a member portion contacting said medium being fed to increase a frictional force generated on the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller;

wherein the member portion is not rotably connected to the align roller, and wherein the member portion is not vertically aligned with any [align] roller.

21. (Amended) [The feed assistance apparatus of claim 18,] A feed assistance apparatus for feeding a medium in a medium processing apparatus, comprising:

[wherein the at least one align roller comprises] at least one vertical align roller to align the medium in the vertical direction; [and further comprising]

a lateral align roller to align the medium in the lateral direction[,];

a member portion contacting said medium being fed to increase a frictional force generated on the medium while the medium is being aligned in the path by the at least one align roller; and

wherein the member portion is not rotably connected to the align roller, and wherein the member portion is not vertically aligned with any roller, and wherein the member portion is mounted between one lateral align roller and one vertical align roller.

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